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INFORMATION REPORT

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Categories of Classified Mail

1. Classified mail in the Soviet Army in Austria was of two categories, "top secret" (sovershenno sekretno) and "secret" (sekretno). 25X1
 list the following types of material that were classified "top secret": All orders originating from CGF Hq., training reports from any lower headquarters, combat readiness reports from regimental and separate battalion-level headquarters going to a higher headquarters, any document pertaining to T/O&E and military occupational specialties (VUS - Voyennaya Uchebnaya Spetsialnost') and movement orders. The following types of material were classified "secret": Certain manuals dealing with tactics and classified equipment, operational directives from a higher headquarters, data on assignment of personnel, all orders originating from a higher headquarters (except CGF), permits to cross the Hungarian, Austrian, and USSR borders (required by personnel going on leave or demobilization), findings of military courts, promotion and reduction orders, leave requests and orders, and any document identifying an individual, a unit, or grade of an individual. 25X1
 material was classified by the originator and that the classification was based on content and in compliance with an unknown directive. 25X1
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2. [redacted] "top secret" and "secret" documents carried no identifying stamp. Instead, they were handled in paper packets which were classified themselves. The individual items inside the outer envelope were sewn through with thread and sealed. Secret documents were listed in a special register by the number of paper packets.

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3. In the 13th Gds Mecz Div, information that would be classified if it appeared on paper, was quite often transmitted orally by telephone.

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[redacted] Unclassified official mail was handled through the postal system. It normally was concerned with routine administration work that did not associate name, grade, or unit of individuals. Units were shown only by FPN and individuals indicated only by name. If a document bore an individual's name and rank it was considered "secret".

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Handling of Classified Mail

4. Classified documents were carried on the Chop (N 48-25, E 22-11) Soviet military train in and out of Austria throughout the year. During the summer months, when the rest of the 13th Gds Mecz Div was in summer camp, [redacted] unit and the Auto School picked up and delivered their own classified documents from the train. In winter, these two units along with the rest of the division were serviced by special trucks from the division's regiments.
5. When the train serviced [redacted] unit, classified mail service was available during both of the daily stops it made in Wilfleinsdorf (N 48-00, E 16-43), Austria. Sometimes, if no one met the train to take the secret documents, they were carried for two or three days by the train crew until the Bn. Secret Documents Clerk showed up. The train ran every day except Sunday. [redacted] there appeared to be no system of notifying units that there were incoming classified documents to be picked up and the Secret Documents Clerk met the train only when he had outgoing items.

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6. The Secret Documents Section of the mail car on the Chop train used an ordinary suitcase as its only classified correspondence container. In the suitcase were packets of classified mail and a register. Also, in the car there were often waterproof canvas sacks of manuals. The manuals were both classified and unclassified.

7. In winter, classified mail was delivered in Ford trucks to all units of the 13th Gds Mecz Div. The trucks were from all the regiments of the division. Each regiment supplied a truck for a month. In a mail truck were an officer (branch and rank unknown), two guards with SMG's (branch and grade unknown), and a driver. these personnel were probably from division headquarters. The officer carried a suitcase for the classified documents and the register, and was armed with a pistol.

Chop-Vienna Military Train Mail Car

8. Attached to the Chop-Vienna military train was one freight car that contained the Chop Train Post Office and Message Center (PSD - Punkt Sboru Donesenije) of CGF. The personnel of the mail car were always from the CGF Hq in Baden. All were signal corps personnel who lived in the CGF Hq compound and fulfilled all their military obligations there. Each train carried a mail car complement of one officer as postal car chief and four EM. the officer had nothing to do with the actual handling of the mail, but merely acted as car commander. Normally, he was a lieutenant or a senior lieutenant. Two of the EM, a sergeant and a private, operated the ordinary mail section and two EM, also a sergeant and a private, operated the classified documents section. All EM were armed with PPSH SMG's and wore black shoulderboards with black piping and signal insignia. there might have been six or seven such teams for the Chop train, as they always seemed to have reliefs in case of leave, illness, or punishment.
9. As these men had to cross the borders of Austria, Hungary, and the USSR, they all carried a considerable number of documents and permits. These documents were validated for each trip and entries were made at each border crossing.
10. The functions of the personnel were divided into two distinct areas of responsibility; one carried the ordinary mail and the other operated the message center and handled classified documents.
- a. The group handling ordinary mail carried newspapers, magazines, and letters from the USSR. In Austria and Hungary it dropped off and picked up mail of the various units enroute. The mail that was picked up was brought to Vienna and from there further transported by vehicle to Baden to the CGF Post Office for processing. In Vienna, the train picked up all packages addressed to the USSR.

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- b. The message center section of this car handled all classified documents and official mail. The secret documents clerks of all units enroute picked up and delivered their classified material at the railroad stations during train halts. These transactions were recorded in a special register that was prepared in two copies. The register indicated the time and number of classified packets received. The recipient signed his name, wrote out in words the number of packets he had received, and placed his unit's stamp on the receipt. This stamp carried the FPN and read "for packets" (dlya paketov). Packets that contained documents classified secret or higher were sewn through with a thin string and sealed. Often this register would only be made up for one unit of the division and the delivery of all classified documents would be made to that unit. The Secret Documents Clerks would then have to go to the receiving unit accompanied by a staff officer of their own unit to get their classified documents. This sometimes involved a long delay and a trip of considerable distance before the proper units received their classified mail. On some occasions, the Secret Documents Clerk [redacted] failed to meet the Chop train and [redacted] picked up the classified mail. 25X1

11. The train made two stops at the Goetzendorf (N 48-01, E 16-35) station each day. In the morning only letters were delivered. At noon it brought newspapers and magazines as well as letters. The PSD was in operation during both stops.

13th Gds Mecz Div Post Office

12. The 13th Gds Mecz Div Post Office [redacted] was located in Moedling (N 48-05, E 16-17). It was known as the Military Postal Station (VPS-Voyenno-Pochtovaya Stantsiya), FPN 71775. It handled the mail for almost all regiments and separate battalions of the 13th Gds Mecz Div. 25X1
13. The personnel of the post office were two officers and two EM. An administrative service (administrativnaya sluzhba) senior lieutenant (name unknown) was the chief. An administrative service junior lieutenant (name unknown) held the title of Senior Receiver (starshiy priyemshchik) of the post office. Both officers wore narrow silver shoulderboards without metal insignia [redacted] A junior sergeant (name unknown) was the Junior Receiver of the post office. He wore signal shoulderboards with signal insignia. The other EM was a private (name unknown) who was the driver of the post office vehicle. [redacted] 25X1
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14. The transportation assigned to the post office by the 13th Gds Mecz Div Hq was one Ford 4-wheel truck, model unknown. In the post office were scales, several metal boxes for mail and cash, rubber stamps with the FPN number and date used for postal administration, a rubber date stamp for cancelling stamps, packages, and other personal mail, needles, thread, cheesecloth for wrapping packages, various blanks (money transfer, customs declarations, receipts for registered letters, receipts for packages and money, and permits), registers for incoming registered mail, and a log for bills of lading for outgoing mail.

Vienna Military Postal Station (VPS) FPN 96309

15. The Vienna VPS [redacted] was the only one in the district 25X1 was located in an enclosure of the Komendatura of the 4th region of Vienna. [redacted] all Soviet installations in the vicinity of Vienna received their mail at this point. 25X1

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16. [] the Vienna VPS differed from the 13th Gds. Mecz. Div. VPS in that it did not belong to any division. While there, he had seen air force, infantry, armored, engineers, and even civilian personnel picking up and delivering mail. At the post office one of the mail clerks had [] had recognized some of the "civilians" as men with whom he had served during basic training and that they had guardedly replied, when queried on their civilian dress, that they were living quite well and serving in counterintelligence. []
17. At the Vienna VPS, mail was also sent and picked up by Soviet civilian administration units and firms. []
18. The personnel of this post office were two officers and two EM. The Chief of the post office was an administrative service junior lieutenant, Shpagin, (fnu). The Senior Receiver was an administrative service junior lieutenant Demidenko (fnu). Both of these officers were narrow silver shoulderboards without insignia and unknown pipin [] two EM were both privates and had job titles of "junior receivers". They wore signal shoulderboards with signal insignia.
19. This post office had no organic transportation. Its equipment was the same as that of the 13th Gds Mecz Div post office.
20. The Vienna VPS always received all of the packages sent by the personnel of [] unit. The packages were taken by the post office only on certain specified days of the month. []

Personal Mail Service

21. Each unit in the Soviet Army in Austria that carried a separate FPN (not counting the letter suffix) had a regularly-assigned EM mail clerk. [] such units were separate battalions and regiments. Higher headquarters normally had an assigned PO whose FPN was used by its personnel. Sometimes two or more units located close together would be assigned the same FPN number for simplification of mail delivery. As an example [] the 55th Sep Tk Tng Bn, and the Auto School, both of the 13th Gds Mecz Div., were under the same FPN. However, in such cases, each unit still furnished its own mail clerk who was subordinate to his own unit political officer. In order to pick up mail for his unit, a mail clerk needed an authorization signed by his CO or the unit chief of staff. Each mail clerk, upon receiving mail for his unit, had to sign a receipt at the post office for the number of newspapers and magazines belonging to both individual subscribers and the unit. At the 13th Gds Mecz Div Post Office at Moedling the mail clerks had to sign for the number of incoming letters. [] during the last year [] the number of letters was estimated and not counted in order to save time.

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22. When a mail clerk was notified by the post office that someone in his unit had a letter of monetary value, the mail clerk needed a signed authorization from the addressee to pick up this letter. This authorization had to be countersigned by the Bn. Chief of Staff. The only other alternative was to have the addressee accompany the mail clerk to the post office and personally receive the letter. When privates received money from their parents or relatives in the USSR, it was the duty of the unit Chief of Finance to initiate a deposit book for them. All personnel in higher grades already had deposit books. The initiation of a deposit book involved a considerable amount of bother to the Chief of Finance [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] he normally detailed the mail clerk to talk to the private and explain the situation. EM would sign a statement that they refused the money and it was then returned by the post office to the sender without any explanation. [redacted] a deposit 25X1 book had to be initiated because Soviet currency was not permitted outside the USSR.
23. In order to pick up private registered mail or printed matter (banderol'), a mail clerk had to sign a military register at the post office, containing the following information: the type of mail (registered letter or printed matter), place from where sent, sender, addressee, and the total pieces. After filling out the register, the mail clerk signed the register with his title, name, and the date. The register was made out in two copies and the mail clerk signed only the duplicate. Such mail had to be delivered personally and the addressee had to sign a receipt for it. In cases where the addressee was no longer in the unit, the receipt and the mail were returned to the post office.
24. The same transaction was carried out upon receipt of a money transfer from the USSR. When personnel sent money to the USSR, it was sent through the Chief of the Field Bank and only a bonded individual (normally the unit Chief of Finance) received the money and gave a signed roster of senders to the mail clerk for delivery to the post office. Soldiers paid for the money transfer in Austrian schillings which probably were converted into rubles by the finance officer.
25. EM were permitted to send one package every month to the USSR. [redacted] privates rarely sent packages as their monthly pay could not purchase anything worth sending. Those that did send packages normally spent their entire pay of 40 schillings and sent them marked for that value. EM were permitted to send up to 5 kg., officers up to 10 kg., and general officers up to 15 kg. 25X1
26. Until fall 1953, all officers paid a certain amount as a customs fee for sending their packages, whereas, the EM, including extended tour soldiers (sverkharochniki), could send packages free. After this date, all personnel sent packages without paying a customs fee. The authority to send packages free of charge was granted by the Bn. CO and made up by the chief clerk of the Bn. Staff. This authority was signed by the Bn. CO and a copy was retained at Bn. Hq. on file. All copies indicated the grade, full name of sender, addressee of the package, FPN of the sender's unit, and the date of the authority. Enlisted personnel were permitted to send packages only to their immediate families. If the last name of the addressee was not the same as the sender's, the latter had to present to the post office documentary proof of relationship. Until fall 1953, EM either took the packages to the post office personally or had to ask the mail clerk to make the delivery for them. Upon delivery to the post office, contents of the package were checked and the deliverer was permitted to sew it up.

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27. In order to send a package, a declaration, identical to the postal declarations used in the USSR by everyone, had to be filled out and signed. This declaration was purchased at the post office for 30 Austrian groschens. The package was sewn by the sender with string and marked with bold print. It was then weighed and a number was sewn on the cover indicating the weight of the package. This weight and the number of the post office was also written on the package. After this, the postal clerk filled out and gave a mailing receipt for the package. After fall 1953 parcels were collected by the units, sewn up by the senders, and delivered by unit vehicles to the post office.
28. An officer was appointed by each unit commander to handle packages. This officer carried a permanent general clearance signed by the unit CO to handle packages for the unit. This method was initiated so that senders could pack their own parcels. The unit CO normally published an order appointing a specific officer [redacted] the unit Chief of Communications was appointed) as the responsible party for checking all parcels. There was no listing of contents on the package but the post office informed personnel they could not send written or printed matter, watches, food, or glass items. In some units, the appointed officer received no written order but simply received a general clearance from the unit CO. This clearance was an extract from the appointment order and was taken to the post office by the mail clerk or the appointed officer and there, attached to the postal accreditation for the unit. On this clearance was indicated a specimen of the appointed officer's signature and the heraldic stamp of the unit which also showed the unit FPN. This officer was required to complete the reverse side of the declaration filled out by the sender of the package, by writing that contraband was not present and signing his name. The authority to inspect packages was issued on a printed form by each post office to the unit officers appointed to check packages.
29. Until fall 1953, it was necessary for officers sending packages to the USSR to have permits or licenses (litsenzii) or certified permits (fakturny litsenzii) in which they indicated what item was being sent, the material, its color, value, and quantity. At this time, they paid a governmental mailing charge through the unit Chief of Finance. The unit CO then signed the permit and the officer sent his package to the post office. At the post office, the package was opened, the permit was checked for accuracy, and two copies of the permit were placed in the package. The package was then sewn up in a cheesecloth wrapping. (Occasionally, these permits had been issued by the Chief of the Post Office.) The permit was in three copies all of which bore the same number. The third copy was retained by the unit finance officer, while the original and second copy went with the package. [redacted] in L'vov, packages were again opened up and checked at an unknown postal installation, and the second copy of the permit was retained by the installation.
30. All newspapers and magazines received by units were ordered by Div. Hq. through the office of the Div Deputy CO for Political Affairs. The request for these publications was sent to the Div Deputy CO for Political Affairs. The request was sent to the Div. Hq. signed by the unit Dep CO for Political Affairs indicating the number of copies, the name of publications, and the cost per quarter of the desired publications. These were collective subscriptions and individual requests. These subscriptions were signed by the soldiers of each unit, often involuntarily. Those who refused to sign had to report to the unit Dep CO for Political Affairs and [redacted] they "cheerfully agreed" to subscribe.

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31. In cases when the addressee of incoming personal mail had transferred to another unit in Austria, returned to the USSR, or was not in the unit at all, a tag was pasted to the letter envelope or wrapping of the printed matter and this information was written thereon by the mail clerk. Where the new address was known, a note was added directing that the mail be forwarded to the new unit.
32. All incoming mail, except classified matter, was delivered to the mail clerks in large paper bags with a bill of lading attached on the outside of the bag indicating the FPN of the unit of destination. Normally all mail was transported to and from the USSR by train, but material requiring rapid delivery came from the USSR by air. Letters sent to the USSR requiring rapid delivery and all outgoing mail destined for elements of the occupation forces outside the CGF command area (e.g., to East Germany) went by air to the USSR first and were then redirected to the addressee.
33. Ordinarily, private letters and newspapers were brought to the post office by the same train. The issue of this mail was often delayed until the CGF daily publication, For the Honor of the Motherland (Za Chest' Rodiny), was ready for issue. Upon arrival in the unit, the unit personal mail was carried by the mail clerk to the unit library and sorted. Officers' mail was delivered individually by the mail clerk. The mail for the companies was picked up by an EM designated as a company mail man by the Company Deputy CO for Political Affairs. 25X1

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